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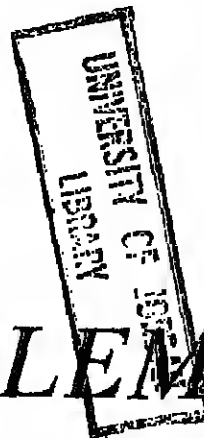
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Doers and their doings

By P. F. Strawson

DONALD DAVIDSON:
Essays on Actions and Events
304pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £14.

In the preface to the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein says that the best he has been able to produce is a series of philosophical remarks in which "the same or almost the same points are always being approached afresh from different directions". Donald Davidson too, in this collection of fourteen previously published essays, constantly approaches the same points afresh from different directions. So far, there is a resemblance. But the difference is greater than the resemblance. Where Wittgenstein eschews explicit theory, Davidson embraces it. Each essay is strictly argued and the whole collection forms a tightly interlocking set of theoretical positions in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind.

Fundamental philosophy is always marked by a distinctive combination of complexity and simplicity: complexity of detail and of argument, and simplicity of the governing ideas, of essential structure or underlying picture. Much of the difficulty of the subject consists in the fact that it is impossible to appreciate the force, or to estimate the soundness, of the governing ideas without attention to the detail of the argument. It is by way of picking at the detail that some structures are brought tumbling down and others revealed as not merely sound—but merely bizarre—as they may at first have appeared.

One central Davidsonian thesis is that there are, or occur in nature, particular individual events; that such events are an irreducible part of our ontology. This is a thesis of platitude, which may seem to need such generous support by way of argument and illustration, as Davidson supplies; in any case, it is the firm basis upon which the rest of the structure rests. Inclusion of such particular events is those attributed as doings, to people; and outgoing doings a certain class are dignified as "actions". Now every event, and hence every doing, has a multitude of properties or aspects; and a doing is an action if and only if it

is intentional, on the part of the doer, in respect of at least one of its aspects or, as Davidson prefers to put it, "under some description". Every action, in its intentional aspect, is believed by the agent to answer to some desire or concern of his, and in so far as it is performed because of such a particular combination of belief and desire, it is, again in its intentional aspect, explained ("rationalized") by that combination. The "because" is causal. Reasons for action, when efficacious, are causes.

Actions not only have, but are, causes; and, as causes of further events, they acquire further properties, or aspects, of their own. A stabbing may cause a death, which is a distinct event, perhaps widely separated in time, from the stabbing; but since the stabbing caused the death, the stabbing itself, the very same event, acquires the character and title of a killing. The stabbing caused the death, but it did not cause the killing. It was the killing. The apparent paradox that the killing was over before the death occurred is easily resolved: though we could not definitely know that the action had been a killing before the death occurred, the victim might foresee his fate and say, with perfect truth though less than perfect knowledge, "You have killed me".

Reference to the multi-properied character of one and the same event, to the fact that the same action may fall under many different descriptions, in respect of only some of which it is an intentional action, naturally leads to a demand for a principle, or criterion, of identity for events. Davidson supplies one: an event *a* is identical with an event *b* if and only if all the causes (effects) of *a* (of *b*) are also causes (effects) of *b* (*a*); i.e. if *a* and *b* have the same causes and effects. As a simple consequence of the logic of identity, this answer is hardly illuminating. But the fact that Davidson gives it reflects, or illuminates, the central position which the concept of cause occupies in the structure of his ideas.

Davidson sees the predicate "caused" as a straightforwardly extensional two-place predicate of particular events. That is, if it is true to say of a particular event, *c*, that it caused another particular event, *d*, then the truth of the statement in no way depends on the choice of descriptions of *c* and *d*. Any pair of correct descriptions of the events can be substituted for any other pair without change of truth-value. It is indeed implied by such a statement that there are some descriptions of *c* and *d* such that, under those descriptions, the statement that *c* caused *d* instantiates a (strict) law. If we know what the law is, and that *c* and *d*, appropriately described, instantiate it, then we have more than knowledge of a singular causal truth; we have an explanation. But we can know either knowing the law or having an explanation, and we may have an explanation without knowing the law.

These views on the relations of cause, law and explanation are essential to the development of Davidson's doctrine of the relations of the mental and the physical. He maintains, and it will scarcely be disputed, that some mental events are causes of some physical events and vice versa: e.g. desire and belief move to action, hence to bodily movement; belief-formation results from perception, hence from physical stimulation.

Davidson's principal reason for

rejecting the notion of strict psychophysical laws relates to the explanation of action. We can indeed interpret people's behaviour, explain their intentional actions, by reference to their reasons, their beliefs and concerns; and such explanations are causal. But these, our schemes of psychological explanation of behaviour, though both generally adequate and certainly indispensable, or in principle resistant to incorporation in systems of strict law. Yet strict law there must be where there are causes; and only the physical system can supply it. Hence, once more, the identity conclusion.

The argument clearly pivots on the notion of "cause". The psychological status which rationalize an action could no explain it unless they caused it; and they could not cause it unless the causally related items fell, under some description, under a strict, hence a physical, law. But the two-step inference from explanation to strict law, in the notion of cause, seems shaky, since the terms of the admittedly adequate and indispensable explanations are, by hypothesis, not the terms of strict law. Which link, if either, should we query? We could allow either that reasons can be efficacious without being causes or that not all causes have a backing of strict law. I incline to the latter alternative. In either case we avoid the identity conclusion while conceding all but one of the premises. In avoiding the identity conclusion, we need not deny that every mental state or event has, in the current innocuous jargon, a physical "realization" upon which it is "supervenient" (a point which Davidson insists on, while denying psychophysical law).

But we do well to avoid the explicit identity conclusion if we can, since it is too difficult to reconcile with the irreducibly subjective character of conscious experience—a feature to which Davidson alludes but which he seems, surprisingly, to regard as of little import.

The topic of event-identity in general deserves further consideration. Davidson's arguments to the effect that, e.g. an action of stabbing may be identical with an action of killing, an act of button-pressing identical with an act of ship-launching etc. are, I think, conclusive. The causal consequences of an act may confer upon that very same

act a character unrecorded in its more rudimentary descriptions. Nor, as Davidson notes, is the multiplicity of acts a matter of causal consequences alone. The social and physical context of a performance may similarly enrich its character: so an action of writing one's name on a piece of paper may be identical with an action of signing a legal document which may in turn be identical with an action of assuming a grave responsibility. It is a curiously noteworthy fact that in common speech we rarely, if ever, express such identities as these in the explicit language of identity, i.e. by using the terms "the same" or "identical". We make use, rather, of such constructions as "By (or in) x-ing he p-ed (or w-a-y-jug'd)": thus, "He killed him by stabbing him". In signing, he was assuming a grave responsibility".

It is more than an illustration of the fact that physically interesting truths are often not (and perhaps not often) reflected in a peripatetic way on the surface of common language?

Well, it is at least that. But it may be a little more. When, in common speech, we do use the explicit language of identity in speaking of events, the different event-descriptions with reference to which the question of identity arises will normally share a common expression for a sort or kind of event. Was the road accident (wedding, fight) a witness yesterday, the very same road accident (wedding, fight) on that which my colleagues were discussing at luncheon? Was the cry which woke me in the night the same as the cry which woke you? Davidson remarks, on passing, that individuation "its best" requires sorts or kinds that give a principle of identity and of counting. We may delete "at its best" and reflect that the coyness of common speech in its employment of the identity-concept, in relation to events may after all be more revealing than obscuring: directly revealing in its manifest obelance to the sortal principle and indirectly so in thereby covertly emphasizing the distinctiveness of that feature of actions which Davidson so effectively brings out, viz. that one and the same action may properly be classified under headings which are not (as surely "a stabbing" and "a killing" are not subordinate to) a common sortal concept.

Further, reflectively seeing, the

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A gentlemanly career

By Elizabeth Monroe

BRITTON COOPER BUSCH:
Hardinge of Penarth
A study in the old diplomacy
381pp. Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String
Press. \$19.50
0 208 01830 1

On the whole, diplomats do not make good biographers, nor do diplomatic lives good biographies. Lipsa that have been sealed by long practice do not open easily, and Sir Ronald Storrs, in *Orientations*, is almost alone in having written a best seller. Yet every now and then a historian is captivated by a man's grip of his job, and this is what happened to Britton Cooper Busch.

Professor Busch is an American who has written three very good books on the long struggle waged between London and the Government of India to determine whether the latter was entitled to a policy under to a council of ex-members of the Indian Civil Service sitting in London. During his research, he read the Hardinge papers and realized that no one had undertaken to write the life of this man who had had an unusual career, as part diplomat, part administrator.

Charles Hardinge had all the assets but one required for the diplomatic corps: he had only a mediocre private income. He was mild, handsome, good at games, and had what used to be called "good blood". Diplomacy was a career that was "secure", doing well in it depended on three elements: diligence, luck and a good wife. Hardinge soon procured the last by marrying a cousin who was clever,

a friend of the royal family and a good enough violinist to play at embassy concerts. But his first post was pure luck. He was sent to Constantinople, and there, bored with the duties of a glorified clerk, through his industry caught the notice of his ambassador, Lord Dufferin. "By studying his methods of diplomacy and by listening to his views on political questions, I learnt during those three and a half years more of the science of diplomacy than at any other time." He had also made a firm friend in high quarters.

There followed posts in Berlin and the Balkans, in one of which, Romania, he negotiated the marriage of Queen Victoria's niece and seized the chance to conclude an extradition treaty and cancel a ban on English cotton goods. For these facts, at only thirty-five, he was unusually made a C.B. Even more unusual was a choice that he made in 1895, and which illustrates his regard for power was the first aim, the astonishment of colleagues, he traded the pleasures of Paris for roughing it in Persia. "My theory is that one makes one's own luck." Here, on his own for much of the time, he played the "great game" with skill, once defeating a Russian bid to organize a run on the British Bank of Persia. "Were you not sometimes afraid of the responsibilities you had assumed on your own initiative?" asked Lord Salisbury. But Hardinge had shown judgment and decisiveness, and being given the councillorship at St Petersburg. He weathered the intricacies of Russian politics and after little more than a year as the youngest under-secretary in London, was sent back to Russia as ambassador. "I had really never imagined the possibility of becoming an ambassador at only 45 years old."

His two years in St Petersburg coincided with the Russo-Japanese war, which offered scope for diplomatic tact; subsequently, he watched the snow turn red with peasant blood in the massacre of January 1905. But before the Czar's vague liberalization plans took shape, Hardinge was back in London as Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office—again singularly young for the job. After the Liberal victory of 1905, he found himself working with Sir Edward Grey—a time of "ceaseless sunshine without a shadow". Office organization improved, and as German plunders built up—over the Boer War, over incidents in China, Morocco and Persia, the Baghdad Railway and finally, Germany's naval building plans—the two men drew closer together, more inclined to link with Russia, though nothing could be said of an alliance because of British public feeling about the Czar's reactionary rule.

Hardinge's chief accomplishment during these Foreign Office years was the relationship that he formed with the King, Edward VII, whom little escaped, bad with unerring judgment spotted Hardinge as the rising man in diplomacy, and, abandoning precedent, chose him instead of a cabinet minister to accompany him on his trips abroad. ("You should have seen the commotion in the F.O.") But the device worked, and was repeated, for the King found Hardinge as useful in transmitting his policy suggestions to the Foreign Office as Hardinge found the King's friendship in giving him leverage in the Office. ("I like working for the King," he wrote to his wife, "he is so appreciative—not like the F.O.") Yet he was scrupulous in telling Grey and

others all that passed between them.

For years, Hardinge had won in the footsteps of his grandfather. Strangely, it was Edward VII's death in 1910 that brought about the fulfilment of his wish, for the King had wanted Kitchener, but Kitchener was anathema to others, and late in 1910 Lord Hardinge of Penarth, GCSI, GCIR, suited for Calcutta "full of enthusiasm for my great undertaking". But India in 1910 was a different place from the India of his grandfather. It was now well sprinkled with National Congress members and Moslem Leaguers, all fuming about the partition of Bengal that Curzon had decreed and that Minto had not changed. Yet navigating these shoals was simple compared with organizing the Durbar on which George V had set his heart. Durbar, call for some grand gesture. Should this be free education? Then something, not Hardinge, produced a brilliant idea. Why not move the capital of India to Delhi and simultaneously reinvigorate Bengal? This became "my scheme", frowned on only by the merchants of Calcutta and, of course, by Curzon.

The Durbar was a success. The King and Queen sailed away delighted, but leaving Hardinge with a load of duties, one of which was to prove that sedition was still rife. In December 1912, in Delhi, a bomb was flung from a crowded building at the Viceroy's elephant, seriously wounding Hardinge. The ceremony went on without him but he was badly shaken. For months he did not return to work, so plan Delhi with Lutyens or argue with South Africa over the local rights of Indians. But worse was to follow.

In July 1914, his wife died, followed, soon after the beginning of the war, by his eldest son.

Melancholy but dogged, he was ahead, recruiting Indians, sending Indian brigades to France, biding India's assault on Mesopotamia. When, there, the moment came to decide whether to advance and for a commander-in-chief to lead, and this turned out to be wrong. Months later, after his time was up and he had returned to his old job at the head of the Foreign Office, a Mesopotamian Commission assured him for his failure to send reinforcements, or to plan his own move to meet a dinner. He took the unusual step of dedicating himself to the House of Lords. Fortunately, "I came out on top, my fight for my reputation, meant more to me than life."

But the Office was a change place. Tired men had no time for diplomatic niceties; Grey was a sickling officer; Balfour was "going old". Worst of all, a new Minister, Lloyd George, had set to running foreign affairs with staff of his own creation, and set amateurs to replace tried diplomats. Arthur Henderson, Derby, and Cliffe to Washington, Derby to replace the ambassador, but Lord Bertie. After a desperate time of uselessness at the Conference, Hardinge was eventually rewarded with two years in the Embassy in Paris, but he was on the end of a telephone line. London, and the sweets had gone.

Professor Busch has written first in a new series of "Handcarved Coffins", and if these are as good as this one, and as carefully written, the series should do well. While telling the story, he has stuck to the portrait of a man—pleasant, decisive, a crisis, impatient of fools, capable of being brusque but in revolt of friends. The "diplomacy" was Hardinge's and the book is aptly subtitled

Russophobia on the march

By Igor Vinogradoff

JOHN SHELTON CURTISS:
Russia's Crimean War
597pp. Durham, North Carolina:
Duke University Press. \$29.75.
0 8223 0374 4

John Shelton Curtiss has made much more use of the Russian authorities for the history of the Crimean War than any previous Western writer and takes proportionately less notice of the mass of folklore gathered round the subject by English journalists and poets and story-tellers for Little Arthur's benefit. It is refreshing not to find the names of Cardigan or Balaclava in his index and he manages to dismiss Florence Nightingale with a few lines.

The outcome is a far fairer and more balanced picture of the Crimean War—its causes, implications, course and ending—than will be found in the customary Western narratives. The essential facts have long been well established but Professor Curtiss re-states them very fully, in an abundance very clearly, with an abundance of supporting evidence, dredged from a great mass of material in several languages, most of all Russian. The following points emerge beyond dispute.

It was not Russian bad faith and aggression that caused the war. The rulers of the great maritime powers of France and England were the wrongers. That selfish adventure Napoleon III resurrected a moribund quarrel over the custody of the Holy Places to Palestine in order to rally French clerical opinion against "schismatic" Russia, the oppressor of Catholic Poland, while at the same time using his long-standing "Carthaginian" influence to frighten Austria into joining his recent soviet, the Emperor Michael I. That the "conquered" French army, over-extended in 1854, suffered the effects of an electric ruler, constantly concerned with the next political move, might humble an unpopular Russian monarch who refused to recognize him as a legitimate ruler was a further, very catchier,

that it broke up the Concert of Europe in favour of a French alliance with England, his most dangerous rival in the West and on the seas, was perhaps the strongest motive in Napoleon's complex mind. Once he had set his propoganda machine in motion, he needed no great skill to manoeuvre England into passionate partisanship on his side, for here was a cheap and easily presented quarrel between "goodies" and "baddies" such as public adored.

No matter that there was no worthwhile English interest to be served by war with Russia, which indeed, let alone to England's security or to her command of the sea, there was a bully for John Bull and the English middle-classes, whose Russophobia could hardly be exaggerated at this period, all the more so because a naval war seemed easy for the strongest fleet in the world against poorly defended coast-lines, could always be bought, if not in the slums of London and Glasgow, in Ireland or America or from a rising power like Sardinia.

No matter that the Queen and the Prince Consort, the Times and the Rothschilds, great Whig magnates like the Duke of Devonshire, castle and Gladstone, the Manchester freetrader, the Bright and Cobden school, most of what was sensible and humane and far-sighted in English public life—were against a war with Russia, in all districts and in all despots whom they a rattling Turkish despotism, which they despised. Once a public opinion began to boll in the City of London and the now middle-class, no politician could with impunity of the political centre, multi- Daumier and Doré in France, Doyle and Leach and Tonnell and their names in England, the age of venal, vicious, rascals, unrestrained by "tyrants" against foreign irrelevances as attempts at conciliation, provided a sufficiently lucrative game could be created of the enemy to be destroyed.

Once the agitation against Russia had begun to swell, rabble-rousers like David Urquhart took no opportunity to stir up feeling on behalf of the "noble Christians" who

were being subdued by Russia in Caucasus—a euphemism for the slave-trading princes of Abkhazia and Shamil's fanatical Daghestani plunderers of Christian Georgia—while Stratford de Redcliffe used his enormous influence in Stamboul to stiffen the most rigid of "old Turks" against Russia and the claim that she represented through her Christian subjects of the Porte.

Here was Palmerston's opportunity—his chance to show his self-contradictory aristocratic faith in a government, humiliate all his adversaries from the Court to the Manchester Liberals, and embark on a policy he seems seriously to have believed feasible, the mutilation of the Russian Empire with the loss of Poland and Poland and the Caucasus and the whole littoral of the Black Sea. He got his arguments from psychopaths like Urquhart or like Stratford de Redcliffe or aged Polish magnates like Krasiński or tozyński, who thought of Russia in seventeenth-century terms and were convinced that "subject peoples" would rise against Moscow as the Ural Cossacks and the Bashkirs had risen under Pugachev in 1773 or the Ukrainians under the false Dmitry in 1604-05.

Palmerston was misled by his informants or, more probably, by his own prejudices. The minor victories which the Allies gained in the Crimea at enormous cost—the capture of Sevastopol after an epic struggle lasting eleven months—were won thanks to superior sea communications, better guns, overwhelming numbers (with Inkermann the one exception) over second by their extraordinary endurance. How bravely the Russian peasant soldier was still prepared to die for Russia (and under good leaders, like Totleben and Nekhludov, Krutsov, and Ostou-Sacken and Prince Gortschakov. This national resistance was all the more impressive because two thirds of the Russian army, including the whole Imperial Guard, was pinned down in Poland against a possible stab in the back, against a possible assault by the Swedes.

The Poles did not rise, the Finns were loyal, the Christian Georgians and Armenians of Transcaucasia stood by Russia against Shamil's marauders and enabled a smaller

Russian army to take the great fortress of Varna from the Turks. Advise all the Russophobia which had driven the English middle classes frantic roused very little echo in France, where—Sebastopol once taken—the feeling for peace overwhelmed any strong. Napoleon III had attained his main object; he had plashed his Ultramontane clergy, satisfied his army (to whom and not to the English, Sebastopol had fallen) and split the Holy Alliance between Austria and Russia. He had no wish to throw away more French lives in the chimerical hope of conquering the Russian Empire. Austria was ployed to send an ultimatum to St Petersburg and the Treaty of Paris was signed in March, 1856.

The Concert of Europe had been irretrievably fractured and a series of minor European wars followed until the establishment of united Germany and united Italy in 1871. The final upshot was the dis-

All fronts at once

By Brian Bond

JOHN TOLAND:
No Man's Land: The story of 1918
651pp. Eyre Methuen. £10.
0 413 47710 X

John Toland is a member of the heavy brigade of popular American historians who believe in the complete saturation of their target with massive bombardment of quotations and descriptive journalism. His weighty book is aptly subtitled, for it is essentially a story without any real attempt to analyse issues, reappraise evidence or reach conclusions. It is a story that has been told before with equal skill and greater critical perception by John Keegan, the late Rupert E. Smith and Barrie Pitt—to name but three.

Mr Toland's technique is to convey an idea of what it must have been like through an impressionistic collage of eyewitness accounts and memoirs, employing direct speech wherever possible. A typical excerpt describing a cavalry

astrous system of great alliances confronting one another, a rapidly industrializing Europe, a system which culminated in catastrophe of 1914.

Professor Curtiss's useful might have been better for a different and less ponderous selection of material. That he ignores the story's superb Sebastopol siege, the best contemporary eyewitness description of that heroic defence is nothing short of startling. Detailed step-by-step précis of confused diplomatic exchanges, 1853-56 does not make for a less understating of Napoleon's Palatinate or Stratford de Redcliffe's mayday, still less explains Duval should have sacrificed with monarchical Russia. It may be any hint unkind to append it of minor or less important forerunners; Gladstone could never have been called a Whig or Crown Jew William of Prussia (later German Emperor), a Russophile.

utack on March 30, goes as follows: "A cuckoo... showed one of the troops. 'On are the Strulicon's Horse!' 'Strulicon's Horse! You'll be bloody bull' if yer don't get nrr. No way! The sholtorn nrring this mrr falls with bullets in both thighs and two in his chest. 'Corry on boy! ha shouted, then nrrered his words. 'Vve hava won.'"

In the space of a few pages the reader is transported from the heavy party of a private in the trenches to Holsa, his headquarters and then to Lloyd George in the War Cabinet. Some readers, particularly in the United States where the book was originally published, must find this method exciting, but for the reviewer the effect is bewildering and numbing. To be sure, admirably combated memoirs, like those of Paul Maza, Rudolf Binding, Arthur Behrend and Patrick Campbell, exploited with considerable skill and it will be a bonus to new readers are hereby drawn to original. The maps are just about adequate and the ninety-nine illustrations, many of them unpleasant, convey a vivid impression of the war on all fronts. This book, though not recommended to serious students of military history, will doubtless reach and satisfy a large readership.

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